

Tahoe: Highly Fun

DAVE LOCKHART AND DAVE WERETKA

There is only one Lake Tahoe with its crystal clear cool water that looks like it is good enough to drink. Your golf thirst will certainly be quenched if you come out to explore the spectacular golf region encompassing Lake Tahoe, Reno and Carson City, Nev., and Truckee, Calif.

The proper place to start this tour of the area is Edgewood Tahoe Golf Club, seen each year when celebrities take their golf seriously. So can you.

While it is highly unlikely you can get a round in at Edgewood Tahoe during tournament week, the rest of the summer is wide open for traveling golfers. The 7,555-yard, George Fazio-designed course – he also designed Butler National – showcases the Sierra Nevadas, Lake Tahoe, and the magic of South Tahoe. With sneaky doglegs and elevated greens, Edgewood Tahoe is manageable for all golfers, yet a strategic journey for players looking to best old man par. The lake is featured on 14 holes, so bring a camera because this course could fill a 12-month calendar

with awe-inspiring images that do not require Photoshop.

The tournament that helped make the course famous is held each July, the one place where Hollywood, NFL, NBA, MLB, and NHL stars gather to play golf. The American Century Championship is the best celebrity golf tournament on the planet. What makes it so special is that these stars interact with the 30,000-plus spectators. If you have watched coverage on NBCSN, you understand that this event is as engaging as and as fun as any golf tournament anywhere. If you go, be sure to bring a camera, a few Sharpie markers, and an appetite for golf, for the red carpet is replaced with lush turf and a panoramic backdrop that will turn your head faster than Charles Barkley attacking a free buffet table. Former Dallas Cowboys quarterback and now CBS NFL analyst Tony Romo emerged as the victor this year.

To make things even more enticing, the adjacent Lodge at Edgewood was just designated the No. 1 resort hotel in the U.S. in *Travel + Leisure's* 2018 World's

Best Awards. Opened a year ago on the shores of Lake Tahoe, the Lodge offers an exceptional level of luxury. It's home to 154 luxury rooms and suites, each boasting its own gas fireplace and private deck or terrace. Impeccable attention to detail and a seasoned eye for aesthetics make for spaces you won't want to leave ... as you realize all the beauty and tremendous golf that surrounds you. In its 50th year of operation, it's plain to see that Edgewood Tahoe continues to get better and better.

Incline Village features two golf courses that will have golfers itching for more. The Mountain Course is one of them, and this Robert Trent Jones Jr. design will appeal to even the most demanding of golfers.

The Mountain Course, designated a Certified Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary, offers a unique design that brings the most out of its immensely scenic qualities. Jones used the natural landscape to create a course that is one with nature, but more than challenging for low-handicappers. Don't let the par-58 fool you into thinking

it's a walk in the park. This course has always been high on the list for Tahoe locals, and the price is nice.

When you're done with your round at Incline Village you'll want to hit up Wild Bills BBQ at the Mountain Course. Wild Bill's offers authentic slow-smoked barbecue specialties such as pulled pork and tri-tip sandwiches and St. Louis-style spare ribs, with house-made sides and barbecue sauces to go with each item. Tasty food and tasty vistas combine at this gorgeous mountain setting overlooking the 10th tee at the Mountain Course.

It is not very often a golf writer could scribble as many words about a clubhouse as he can about the associated golf course. At Nakoma Golf Resort & Spa, the golf plays second fiddle to the Frank Lloyd Wright-designed clubhouse and prairie-style architecture that graces its community. This is Wright's only clubhouse design and it sat in his archives until fifteen years ago.

When Nakoma gave life to the wigwam/alpine peak clubhouse design, an

awe-inspiring community and golf course followed. The Dragon, Nakoma's scenic yet ever so challenging golf course, is dramatic and penal. Slaying the dragon requires practiced patience, steely nerves, and possibly a sword. Nakoma is a Lake Tahoe experience where design meets nature. However, be sure to include a round on a mystic golf course where a fire-breathing nemesis lurks around every dogleg.

In the outskirts of the historic town of Carson City lies Genoa Lakes Golf Club. It's a bit out in the country, but that's what makes these two 18-hole courses such a treasure. The Genoa Lakes Course, co-designed by Peter Jacobsen and John Harbottle III, is a links-style course where rolling fairways meet head-on with the eastern slopes of the breathtaking Sierra Nevadas. Lush wetlands and the winding Carson River bring water into 14 holes of play, making long, straight drives the order of the day.

Built for power and distance, the Ranch Course at Genoa Lakes cuts into the rugged Sierra Nevada foothills, just

two miles from the Lakes Course. Johnny Miller and Harbottle were the duo behind this course, which offers open spaces and spectacular high desert views. Over 300 feet of elevation changes, more than 100 bunkers, unpredictable mountain terrain, afternoon breezes, and a waterfall challenge players to a crash course in championship golf.

Clear Creek Tahoe is a bonanza of an experience on the private, yet laid-back Bill Coore and Ben Crenshaw design carved right out of the mountains. In fact, exteriors for the famous TV show "Bonanza" were filmed right on this glorious property many gallops ago. Nearly every hole is a picture postcard framed by majestic pine trees with the rugged mountains as a jaw-dropping backdrop.

While private, Clear Creek Tahoe is eager for guests to sample the golf and explore the available home sites. Of the course, Clear Creek's Steve Schroeder says, "The contours and elevation make it very challenging. The green complexes are challenging, typical of

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Incline Village



Somerset



Nakoma



Genoa Resort



Clear Creek



Coyote Moon



Edgewood

Destinations

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a Coore/Crenshaw property, the fairways are fairly generous and the landing areas are comfortable. You can run the ball on most of the greens, but if you hit the ball in the wrong spot around the greens you are going to face a real challenge to recover to make par or bogey. It's a very 'in front of you' golf course."

New for this year at Clear Creek is Summit Camp, a new family campus that will be the social heart and energy of the community. Here are pools for sunning and swimming, bocce, fire pits, and games for kids of every age. There's a water slide through the pines that is in a world of its own – crafted from massive 100-year-old timbers reclaimed from the adjoining Schneider Ranch..

Across the border in California, Truckee is gold for golfers and just 15 minutes from Lake Tahoe. This is where Chicago's golfers should set up their base camp. Truckee is a collection of boutiques, artisan galleries, culinary surprises, and good live music. It would be difficult to find a more charming alpine town. The downtown will remind guests of the old

west, except this planked boardwalk offers charming coffee shops, terrific bars, and fine dining.

At 6,300 feet above sea level, Coyote Moon Golf Course is a study in isolation. The property is free of home sites and manmade distraction. Coyote Moon surrounds your foursome with ponderosa pines, granite bluffs, and the peaks of mountain ridges. Set on 250 acres, each hole will leave you howling with delight as each challenge cascades over ridges and into valleys. If your golfing options are limited to one round near Truckee, tee it up at Coyote Moon for a full serving of High Sierra golf on an impressive track.

Nearby, the mountainous golf course at Tahoe Donner Resort is challenging and thrilling. The course received a complete bunker renovation project a few years ago. The results were a facelift that brought new life to the property. While the course is narrow, it is enchanting with unique green complexes that shine with gorgeous bunkering. Buena Vista, the finishing hole at Tahoe Donner, plays as a short par 5, where golfers must layup short of the creek, or a short, downhill par 4. When the tee is up, lace your shoes, and activate

your launch sequence for one of the most thrilling shots in the High Sierras!!

Finally, in nearby Reno, Nev., you will find Somerset Golf & Country Club. This a robust championship design from 1992 U.S. Open champion Tom Kite along with the accomplished team of Roy Bechtol and Randy Russell. There are breathtaking mountain views with seven lakes and 62 bunkers with pure white sand. When it gets windy you will enjoy the 400-foot wide landing areas in the fairway so that you will have a fair shot to reach the green. Dramatic elevation changes and undulating greens that will challenge you are the key elements of this track that will certainly entice you to come back.

When you come out this way you need to experience an In and Out Burger. The chain is basically only out in the western U.S., and provides a no-frills tasty fast food experience. It's the ideal spot for a quick lunch between rounds for one of the best burgers you may ever have!

Reno, which has long called itself the Biggest Little City in the World, is pretty cool with its variety of hotels, featuring gaming of course, interesting restaurants, and watering holes. An absolute must is to make the leisurely two-block walk over from downtown to Greater Nevada Field and check out the Reno Aces, the Triple A affiliate of the Arizona Diamondbacks. This place is exactly what a ballpark should be – close to the action seating and a couple of bars with local microbrews. There's even live music after the game in this retro looking, yet modern ballpark. No doubt about it, this highly fun region for golf, nature, exploring, and relaxation is a grand slam home run.

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See these websites for places to stay:
atlantiscasino.com
carsonvalleyinn.com
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For more information, see the website of the Lake Tahoe Visitors Authority: itva.org

ON THE CORKSCREWS

STEPHEN HAWK

As you enter Sonoma county from the south on California 121, one of the first wineries you encounter is Cline Cellars, and there could hardly be a better introduction to the Carneros AVA.

Even as a young teenager, Fred Cline learned to make wine from his grandfather, Valeriano Jacuzzi (yes, he of the hydrotherapy tub, as well as many other innovations). With a \$9000 inheritance from Valeriano, in 1981 Cline founded the eponymous Cline Cellars in Oakley, California.

The winery was relocated to its current location in 1991. The property is the original site of the Mission San Francisco de Solano, the 21st and final of the historic California missions. Although the mission was moved in 1823, the Cline tasting room is located in a rustic 1850s farmhouse that is original to the property, surrounded by spring-fed ponds and thousands of rose bushes. The vineyards also reflect this history, with vines ranging from 80 to 120 years old.

Cline is one of the first of the pioneering Rhone Rangers, a group dedicated to wines from the grapes of the Côtes du Rhône in France (ironic for a boy with an Italian grandfather, no?)

Cline also has been a pioneer in sustainable farming. It is the second-largest completely solar-powered winery in California. Natural cover crops are used to nourish the soils, sheep and goats roam freely as they graze on weeds, and compost teas are used as fertilizer. "We'd be considered 'organic' if we wanted to follow the rules of the government," said Cline. "We are actually *more* sustainable [than the law calls for] by not following their organic rules." He calls his methods "beyond organic."

2017 Viognier \$20
Ah, Viognier [vee-oh-NYAY], such an elusive and underappreciated wine. The grapes are finicky to grow, and once vinified exhibit a wide range of floral qualities, some more delightful than others.

This expression is pale reddish-golden in the glass, with a BAM! nose of honey-suckle. This is followed on the palate by the expected flavor of peach, as well as mango and sour orange. This unoaked

Yes, We Have No Cabernet

wine tastes dry, but has a surprising, slightly sweet finish. To enjoy its nuance, do not overchill.

Drink this tippie with braised tuna in white wine, oven-braised halibut steaks, or Provençal seafood with aioli.

2015 Heritage Zinfandel \$43
The provenance of this Zin are the 100-year-old Big Break, Live Oak, and Bridgehead vines in Oakley, which are dry-farmed in deep, sandy soil. It is crystal ruby in the glass. Flavors of cola, blueberry, and coffee greet you on the tongue. There is just a hint of Zinfandel's characteristic pepper. The body has a nice satin quality, supported by nicely balanced medium tannins and acidity. An eminently drinkable wine.

Enjoy this red with braised pork with sweet and hot peppers, Niçoise chicken with tomatoes and black olives, or lamb with artichokes. .



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